

REMARKS

By the foregoing Amendment, claims 1-36 have been canceled and new claims 37-66 have been added.

Applicants note that new claims 37-61 relate to claims 37-42, 48-56, and 59-63, which were cancelled from parent Application No. 09/502,043 ("the '043 Application"). In the '043 Application, claims 37-42, 48-56, and 59-63 were rejected based on the teachings of U.S. Patent No. 5,880,865 to Lu et al. ("Lu"). In particular, the Examiner relied primarily on the disclosure illustrated in FIG. 6 of Lu. Applicants submit that new claims 37-61 are distinguishable over the teachings of Lu.

As described at col. 4, line 58 to col. 5, line 16, FIG. 6 of Lu appears to disclose a splitter/combiner circuit 602 that includes a 1.3/1.5 micron demultiplexer (or router) 603 to produce separate 1.3 and 1.5 micron wavelength optical signals. When separate multiple optical carriers are used to transmit the switched signals then splitter 604 is either a "fine" demultiplexer or router which separates the closely spaced wavelengths. When a single optical carrier is used to transmit the switched signals then splitter 604 is a power splitter. A combiner 605 combines the approximately 1.5 micron wavelength with the broadcast signal at 1.3 microns.

As Lu sets forth, the splitter 604 is operative only on the switched signals, not the broadcast signal. Thus, the broadcast signal is transmitted to only a single optical network unit (ONU). This limitation highlights the clear distinction between the teachings of Lu and Applicants' claimed invention. In applying Lu to Applicants claims, the Examiner has asserted that the broadcast signal of Lu is equivalent to Applicants' analog signals and that the switched

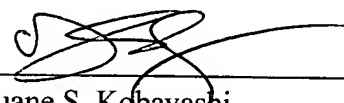
signals of Lu are equivalent to Applicants' digital signals. In Applicants' claimed invention, the analog signal is sent to more than one mini fiber node. By contrast, the broadcast signal of Lu is sent to a single ONU. Thus, even assuming that this asserted equivalence is permissible, Applicants submit that claims 37-61 are still distinguishable over Lu.

Respectfully submitted,

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